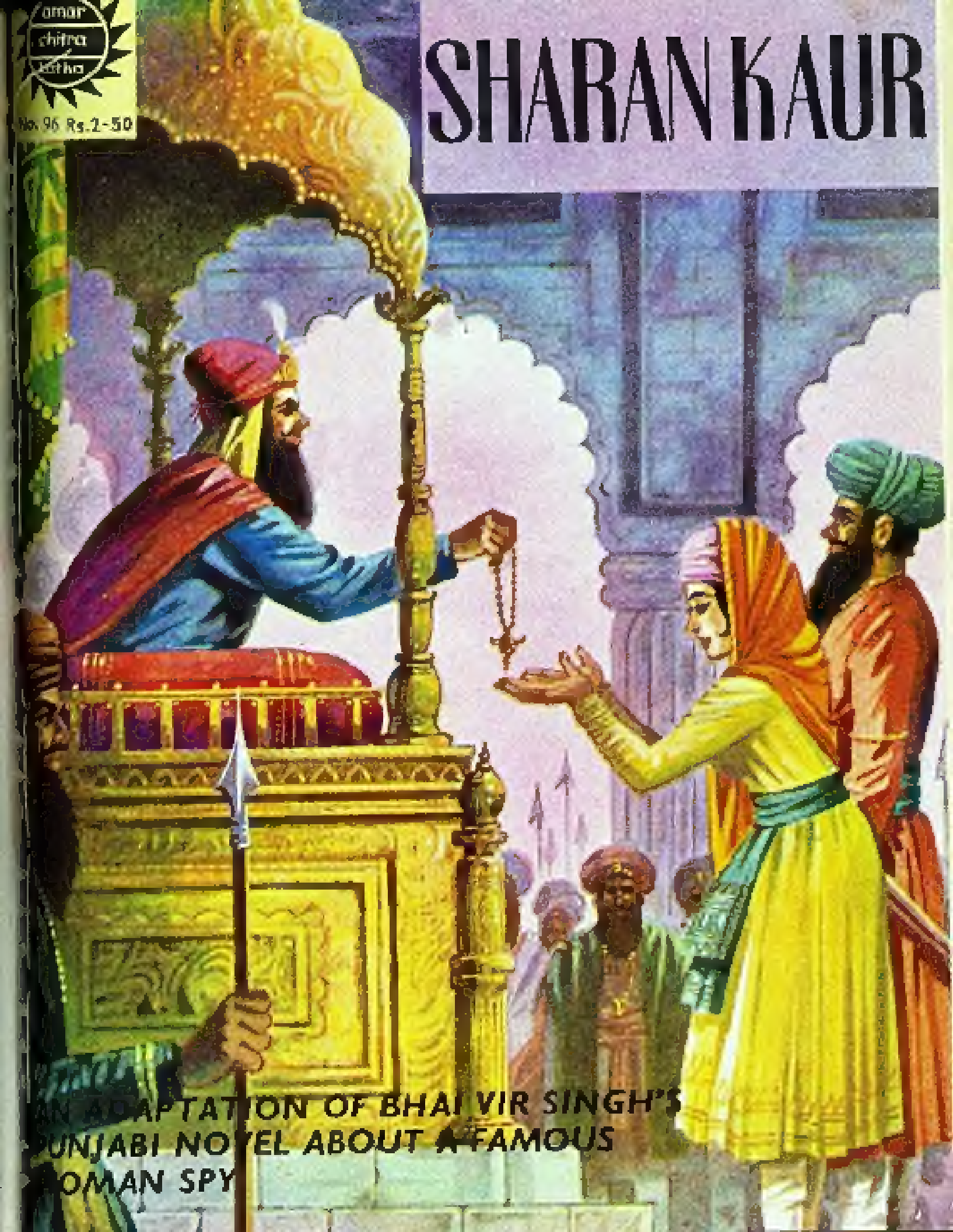


amar
chitra
katha
No. 96 Rs. 2-50

SHARAN KAUR



AN ADAPTATION OF BHAI VIR SINGH'S
PUNJABI NOVEL ABOUT A FAMOUS
ROMAN SPY

Spying always has been a dangerous and risky occupation. Being hazardous, very few women take to this profession. There were some famous women spies like Mata Hari and White Lady in the First World War and Rhine Maiden in the Second World War. They were foreigners but if we look into our own history we come across equally courageous and intelligent women spies who served their country with the same zeal. One of them, Sharan Kaur, was a woman spy during the reign of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. The story of her life tells us how, given an incentive, a positive philosophy to boost her morale and proper training, even a timid and shy woman can be transformed into a fearless and brave heroine.

There is a great deal of literature in Urdu and Punjabi on the exploits of this brave woman, the most well-known among them being the work of Bhai Vir Singh.

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SHARAN KAUR



FORT JAMROD, ON THE NORTH-WEST FRONTIER OF OUR COUNTRY, WAS UNDER CONSTRUCTION. IT WAS BEING BUILT UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF SARDAR HARI SINGH HALWA, WHO HAD BEEN SENT FROM LAHORE BY MAHARAJA RAMJIT SINGH TO SUBDUCE THE REBELS OF THAT REGION.

TWENTY-FIVE MILES NORTH OF JAMROD LIVED SHARNI, THE SIXTEEN-YEAR-OLD DAUGHTER OF A HINDU SHOPKEEPER. ONE DAY —

SHARNI, YOU WILL BE MARRIED NEXT WEEK. REMEMBER! A WOMAN'S HONOUR IS HER MOST VALUABLE POSSESSION. GUARD IT WITH YOUR LIFE.

I WILL NEVER FORGET YOUR WORDS, MOTHER.



A WEEK LATER —

I WILL SOON HAVE TO LEAVE ALL OF YOU AND GO AWAY.

HE'S COME!



THE BRIDEGROOM, BHIMSEN, WAS THE ONLY SON OF VEERBHAN, A RICH BUSINESSMAN.



AFTER THE WEDDING —

YES, MOTHER. WE MUST REACH OUR VILLAGE BEFORE NIGHTFALL. THE ROUTE IS INFESTED WITH DACOITS.

MUST YOU LEAVE SO SOON?



A FEW HOURS LATER, AS THE BRIDAL PROCESSION WENDED ITS WAY THROUGH A NARROW JUNGLE PATH —

SURRENDER
OR DIE!

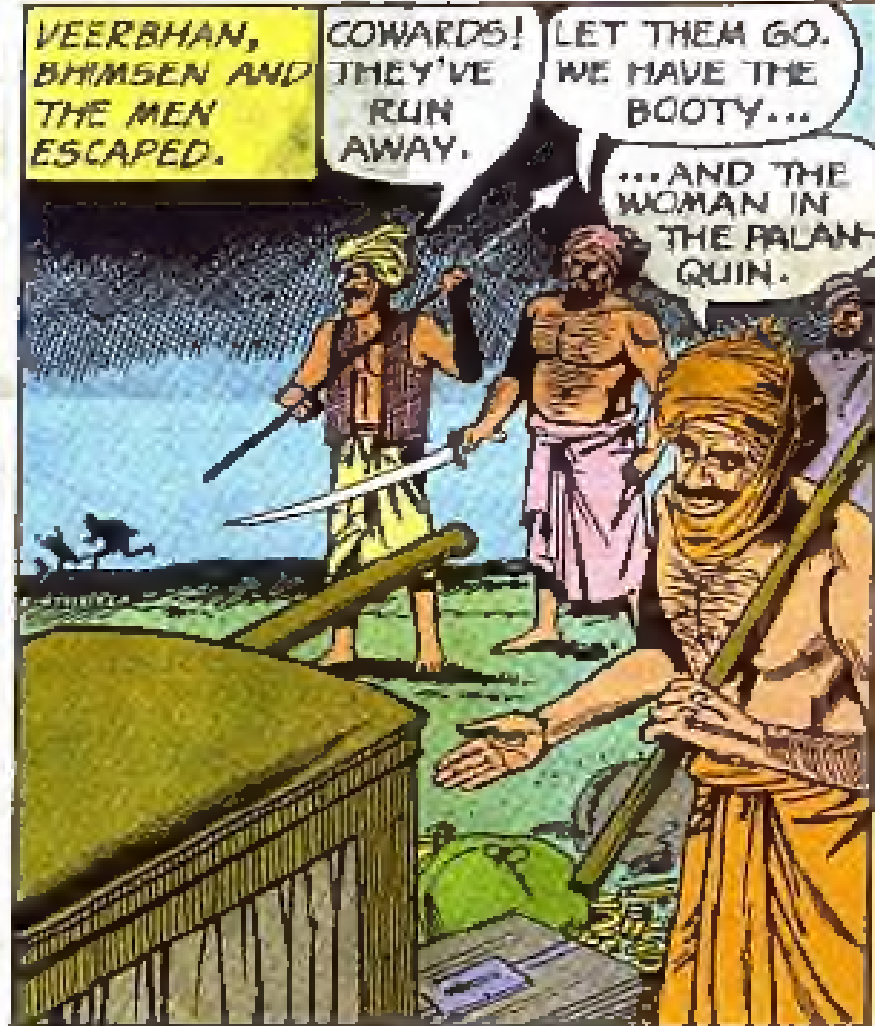
DACOITS!
RUN!

VEERBHAN,
BHIMSEN AND
THE MEN
ESCAPED.

COWARDS!
THEY'VE
RUN
AWAY.

LET THEM GO.
WE HAVE THE
BOOTY...

...AND THE
WOMAN IN
THE PALAN-
QUIN.



THEY DRAGGED SHARNI OUT OF THE PALANQUIN.

A BRIDE!
THE CHIEF WOULD
LOVE TO HAVE
HER IN HIS
HAREM.

MOTHER!
MOTHER!

MEANWHILE, AFTER
RUNNING FOR ABOUT TWO
AND A HALF MILES,
VEERDHYAN AND THE
OTHERS HAD REACHED
A WATERFALL, WHERE
THEY SAT DOWN TO
REST AND TALK.

WE CANNOT RETURN TO OUR
VILLAGE WITHOUT THE BRIDE.
IT WOULD BE A DISGRACE.

NOR CAN WE
GO BACK TO HER
VILLAGE. WHAT
WOULD I SAY TO
HER PARENTS?

AN ELDERLY RELATIVE HAD AN IDEA.

WHY DON'T
WE GO TO
JAMROD AND
SEEK SARDAR
NALWA'S
HELP?

YES, UNCLE.
WHY DON'T WE?
THEY SAY HE IS
A CHAMPION OF
THE OPPRESSED.

VEERBHAN AGREED AND THE PARTY ARRIVED AT JAMROD LATE THAT NIGHT.

MAY WE SEE SARDAR NALWA?

WHY DO YOU WANT TO SEE HIM AT THIS HOUR?

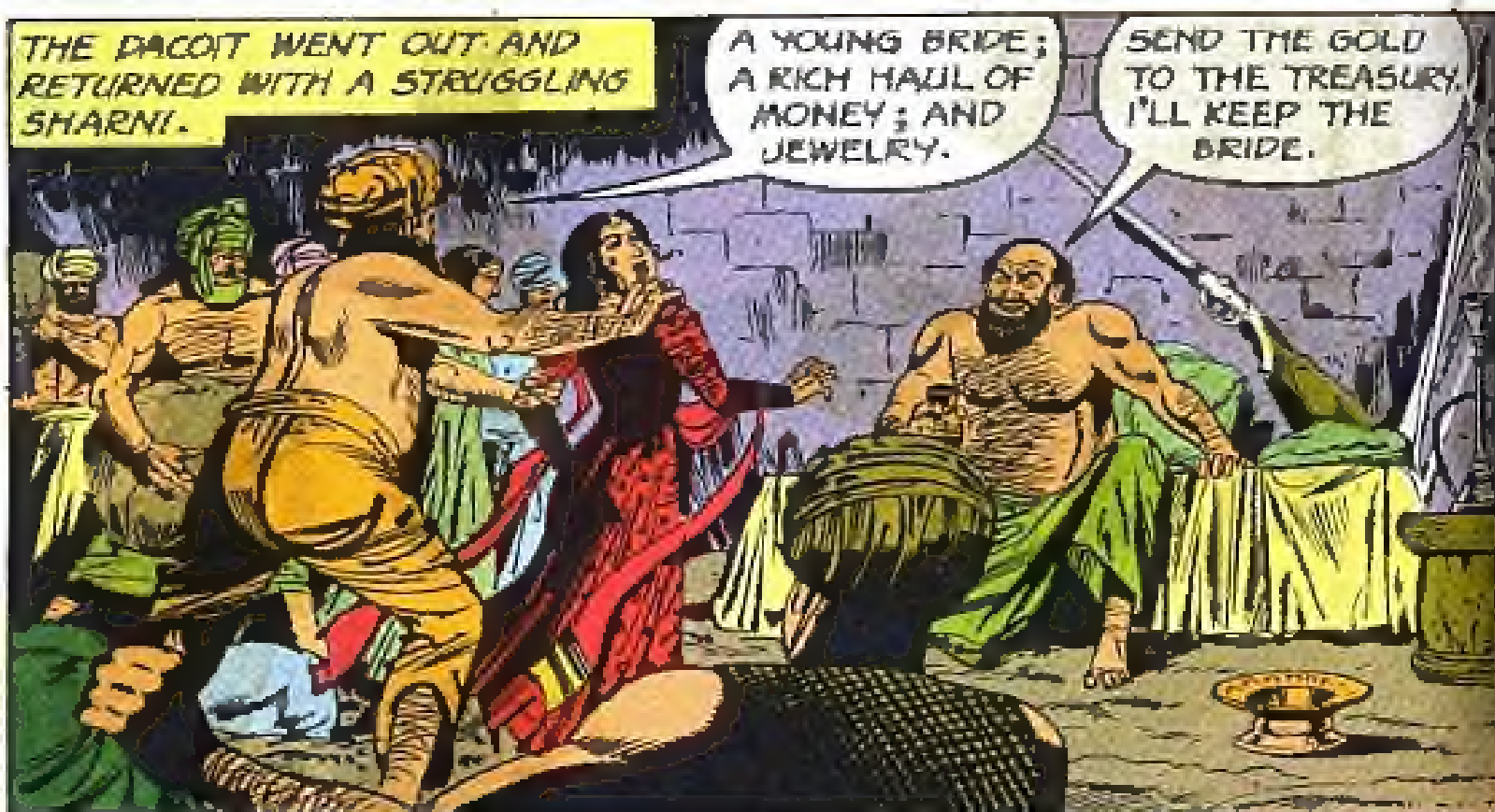
WE CAN'T WAIT TILL MORNING. DACOITS HAVE LOOTED ME AND ABDUCTED MY DAUGHTER-IN-LAW.

THEN THE SARDAR WILL SEE YOU IMMEDIATELY.

THE SENTRY LED THEM TO NALWA - AFTER VEERBHAN HAD TOLD HIS TALE -

THERE WERE SO MANY OF YOU AND YOU COULD NOT PROTECT HER!

SIR, DACOITS ARE MERCILESS AND ...



THE CHIEF TURNED TO A SLAVE GIRL.



LATER, WHEN THE DACOIT CHIEF CAME TO SHARNI'S ROOM, HE WAS SO DRUNK HE COULD BARELY STAND.



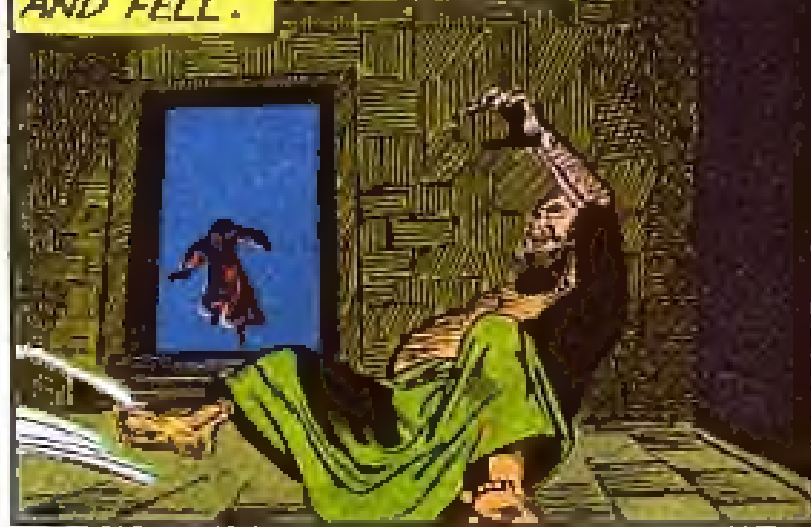
THE CHIEF, AMUSED BY HER VEHEMENCE, SWAYED TOWARDS HER.



SHARNI PUSHED HIM AWAY
WITH ALL HER MIGHT.



DEAD DRUNK, THE DACTOIT
CHIEF LOST HIS BALANCE
AND FELL.



AS SHARNI RAN OUT
INTO THE COURTYARD,
PAHARA SINGH AND
HIS MEN RODE IN.

YOU MUST BE SHARNI.
I HAVE COME TO RESCUE
YOU. ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?

BY GOD'S GRACE
NEITHER MY HONOUR
NOR I HAVE COME
TO ANY HARM, SIR.



PAHARA SINGH DISMOUNTED
AND BRANDISHED HIS SWORD.



COME OUT,
YOU
COWARDS.

WHEN THERE WAS NO RESPONSE,
HE TURNED TO HIS MEN.

ENTER THE HOUSE. ROUND
UP ALL THE MEN. BUT DON'T
TOUCH THE WOMEN.



WHEN ALL THE LADIES WERE
CAUGHT AND HANDCUFFED —

WE WILL
TAKE THEM
TO JAMROD.

O GOD!
YOU ARE
GREAT



AT JAMROD, IN
THE COURT OF
HAKI SINGH
HAKKA —

YOU ARE MEN-
TIONED TO BE
A PRISONER.



AS HAKKA SINGH ARRIVES TO GET UP —

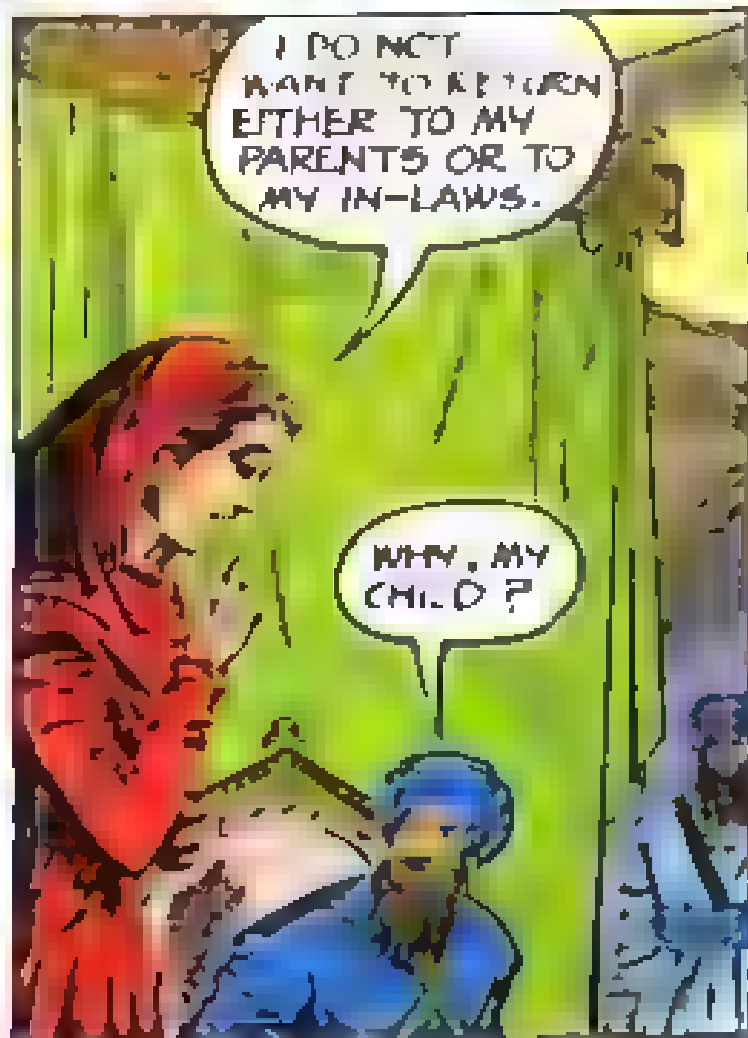
SIR!

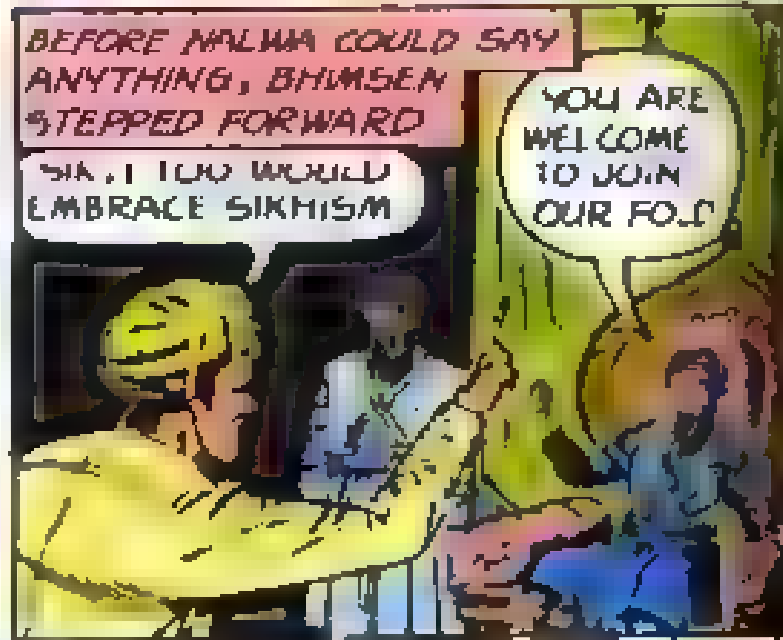
YES, MY
DAUGHTER.



I DO NOT
WANT TO RETURN
EITHER TO MY
PARENTS OR TO
MY IN-LAWS.

WHY, MY
CHILD?





MALWA OBSERVED THE COUPLE FOR A FEW DAYS. THEN ONE DAY HE SPOKE TO MAHA SINGH, THE COMMANDER OF HIS ARMY.

SHARAN KAUR IS INTELLIGENT, BRAVE AND TACITURN. I THINK SHE WOULD MAKE AN EXCELLENT SPY. WHY DON'T WE TRAIN HER TO BECOME ONE?

I TOO HAVE NOTICED HER QUALITIES YES. I'LL TRAIN HER

AND SO BEGAN SHARAN KAUR'S TRAINING UNDER MAHA SINGH.

A FEW MONTHS LATER, MAHA SINGH SENT FOR HER.

BIBI SHARAN KAUR, YOU ARE NOW A TRAINED SPY. I HAVE A TASK FOR YOU.

I WILL NOT FAIL YOU.

I HAVE LEARNT THAT AKBAR ALI OF UTTAMZAI IS PLANNING TO ATTACK JAMROD.

I WANT TO KNOW THE STRENGTH OF HIS ARMY. BHIMBALI SINGH WILL ACCOMPANY YOU.

THE VERY NEXT DAY SHARAN AND BHIMBALI, DISGUISED AS A PATHAN COUPLE, LEFT ON THEIR MISSION. AFTER THEY HAD COVERED SOME DISTANCE--



SHARAN, WE ARE BEING FOLLOWED

DON'T PANIC. BE NATURAL.

WHEN THE PATHAN CAME NEAR--



YOUR FATHER'S VILLAGE IS NOT FAR FROM HERE

WE SHOULD REACH THERE BY DUSK.



WHEN THE PATHAN OVERTOOK THEM, SHARAN KAUR SACKED HER PACE.

WHERE ARE YOU GOING?

TO UTTAMZAI



ANY PARTICULAR REASON?

TO VISIT MY IN-LAWS THEY LIVE THERE

THE PATHAN LOOKED BACK TO GET A GLIMPSE OF SHARAN'S FACE, THEN TURNED TO BHIMBALI.



I'M FROM UTTAMZAI, TOO. BUT I'VE NEVER SEEN HER BEFORE WHOSE DAUGHTER IS SHE?

ALAMKHAN'S

BEFORE THE PATHAN
COULD ASK ANY MORE
QUESTIONS, SHARAN
STABBED HIM

E E AH! YOU
ARE SPIES

WAIT
YOU WON'T
LIVE TO
TELL ON US

HHMMAL, WAS AMAZING

YAA NO, YOU
ARE BRAVE

I AM A SIKH
WOMAN. NOW LET'S
GET AWAY BEFORE
ANYONE ELSE
COMES ON THE
SCENE

THEY WALKED ON IN
SILENCE AT LAST —

THERE IT IS!
UTTARZAI FORT

WE HAVE
REACHED OUR
DESTINATION.



SHARAN / WHIPPED UP INSTANTLY

HOW CAN
THAT HAPPEN,
SARDAR? THEY
HAVE A HUGE
ARMY.

DON'T WORRY. OUR
NUMBERS HAVE SWOLLEN
WHEN WE ATTACK, THE
SIKHS AT JAMROD WILL
BE CAUGHT NAPPING.

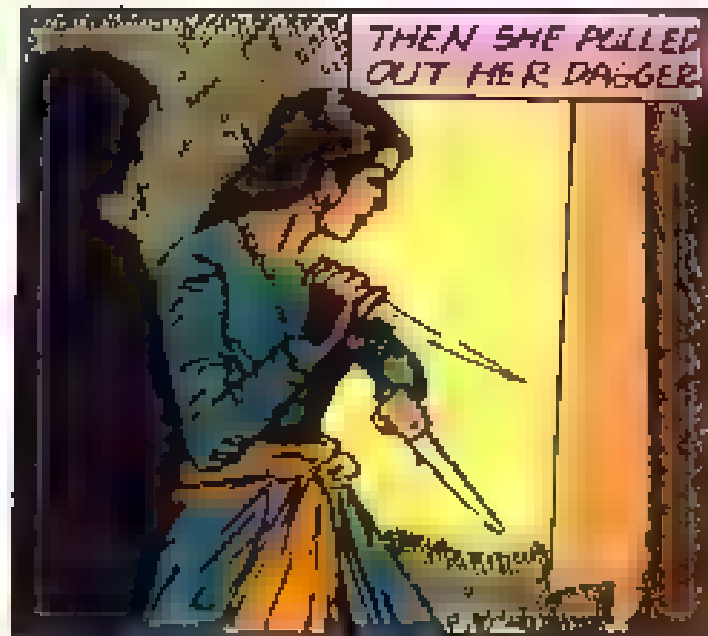
...APPAH WENT ON TO GIVE HER DETAILS ON
THE STRENGTH OF HIS TROOPS.

THANK YOU FOR
THE INFORMATION.

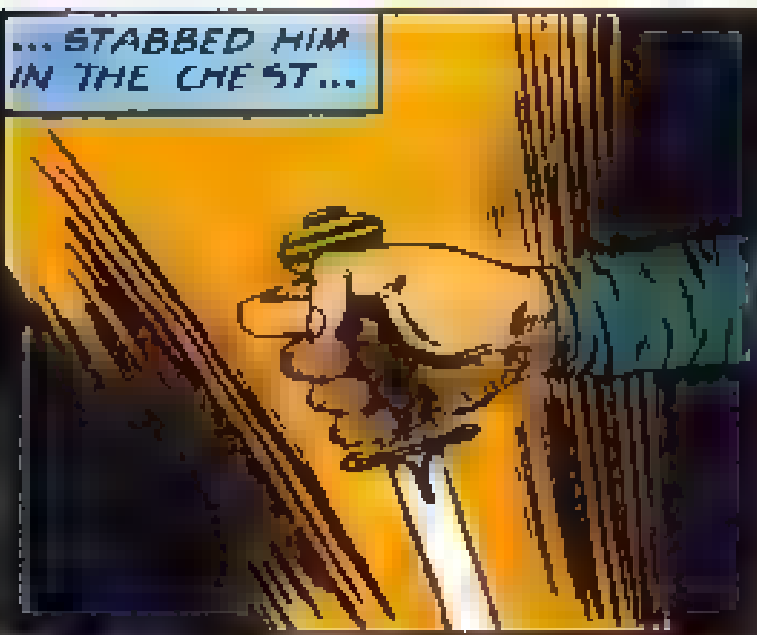
TAKE HEART,
MY CHILD,
STEADY
YOURSELF

...PRESSED IT
TO HIS NOSE.

AT THAT MOMENT
SHARAN WHIPPED
OUT A HANDKER
CHIEF AND



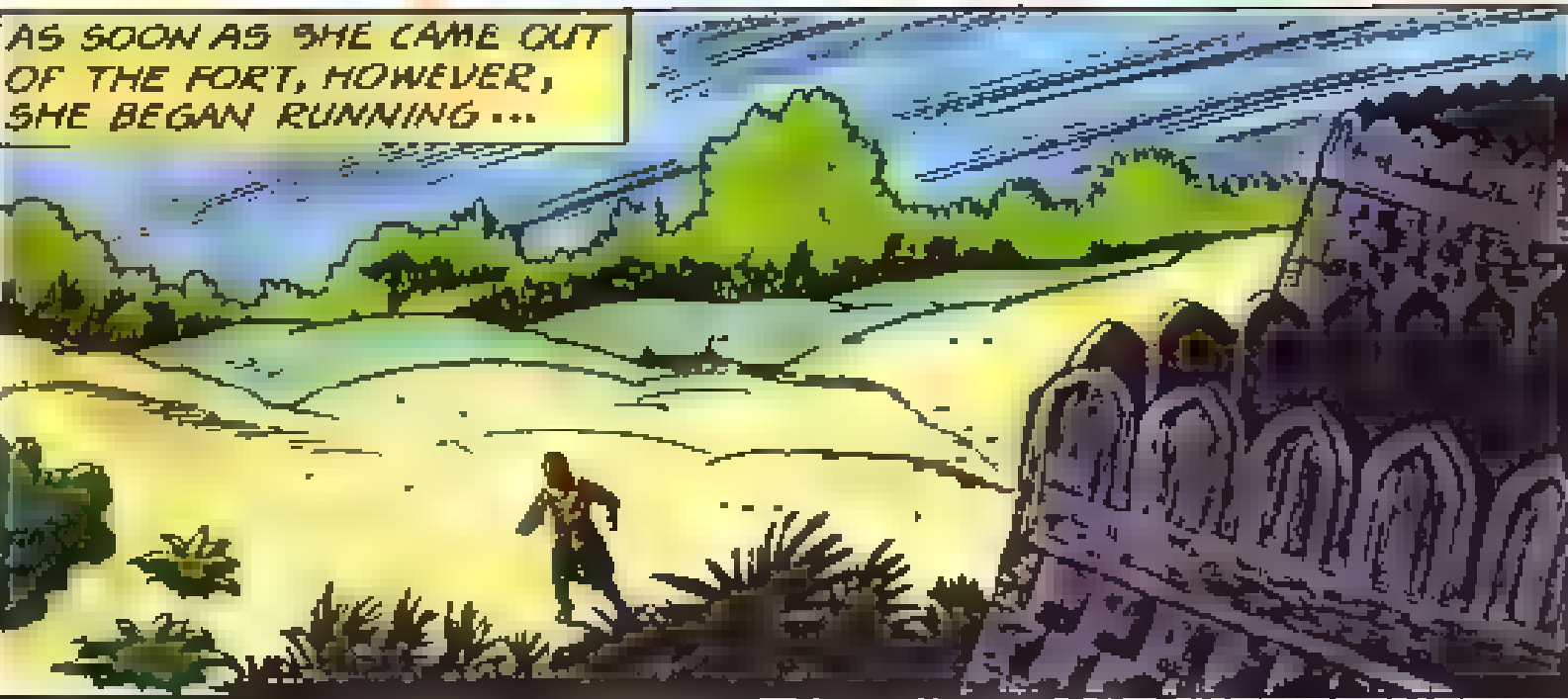
THEN SHE PULLED
OUT HER DAGGER.



... STABBED HIM
IN THE CHEST...



AND WALKED
OUT CALMLY.



AS SOON AS SHE CAME OUT
OF THE FORT, HOWEVER,
SHE BEGAN RUNNING...



THEY WERE RIGHT - THE
PATHANS WERE AFTER
THE CHAL WIK HAD
KILLED THEIR SARDAR

THEY'VE COME.
DON'T WORRY I'LL
HANDLE THEM



HAVE YOU SEEN A YOUNG
PATHAN GIRL PASS THIS
WAY? SHE HAS MURDERED
OUR SARDAR.

WE DID.
IN FACT, I SEE A
GIRL WHO SEEMED
TO BE IN A HURRY
SHE RAN TOWARD
THAT PATH



WENT FOR A SHORT WHILE
AWAY TOWARDS THE PATH -

WE'RE SAFE!

LET US
WALK BACK
TO JAMROD



A FEW DAYS LATER, THE
CONSTRUCTION OF THE FORT

WAS IN FULL SWING. THE
MURDERERS HAD BEEN
KILLED AND THE
FORT WAS BEING
BUILT ON THE SITE
OF THE OLD ONE.



THE NEXT MORNING, THE
MURDERERS WERE
KILLED AND THE
FORT WAS BEING
BUILT ON THE SITE
OF THE OLD ONE.
A NAMED MAN AND
SINGH HEADED THE LIST.

I AM THE ONLY
ONE WHO HAS
THE POWER TO
THE FORT. A
PLAN.



LATER -

SARWAR MALWA, YOU AND YOUR MEN HAVE DONE MUCH FOR THE RAJ. I AM PROUD OF YOU. I AM GETTING MARRIED NEXT WEEK AT LAHORE. I WANT ALL OF YOU TO COME TO THE WEDDING

WE SHALL BE THERE, SARWAR.

AS SOON AS NAUNIHAL LEFT, HOWEVER, NALWA FELL ILL. HE SENT FOR MAHA SINGH.

I WOULD LIKE TO MOVE TO FORT BALAHISSAR FOR TREATMENT. LET THE SOLDIERS GO TO THE WEDDING. YOU STAY BACK WITH A FEW MEN AND TAKE CHARGE OF THE FORT IN MY ABSENCE.

MEANWHILE, THE BRITISH GOT WIND OF THE FACT THAT FORT JAMROD WAS NOT ADEQUATELY MANNED. THEY HELD CONSULTATIONS WITH ONE OF THEIR ALLIES, DOST MOHAMMED, THE RULER OF KABUL.

RANJIT SINGH AND HIS SIKHS HAVE BECOME VERY POWERFUL. SOMETHING MUST BE DONE TO SUBDUCE THEM.

DO YOU HAVE ANY SUGGESTIONS?

NALWA IS ILL AND MOST OF HIS MEN ARE AWAY AT LAHORE. THIS IS THE TIME TO ATTACK FORT JAMROD.

I WILL ATTACK AS SOON AS I RALLY MY MEN.

NEWS OF DOST
MOHAMMED'S
INTENDED
ATTACK REACHED
MAHA SINGH.

SEND BIBI
SHARAN
KAUR TO ME

WHEN SHARAN
KAUR CAME —

I WANT YOU TO
CARRY AN URGENT
MESSAGE TO FORT
BALAHISSAR.

WHAT
IS THE
MESSAGE,
SARDAR?

TELL SARDAR
NALWA THAT DOST
MOHAMMED IS
PLANNING TO
ATTACK US.

IS
THAT ALL,
SARDAR?

THAT IS ALL
AND... YES.
YOU WILL HAVE
TO GO ALONE.
WE NEED YOUR
HUSBAND HERE.

I WILL
LEAVE
IMME —
DIATELY,
SARDAR.

MARAN RAN WIDE TO
FORT MA, ANHASAR AND
GAVE NALWA THE MESSAGE

TELL MAHA
SINGH THAT I'M
COMING. I MUST
RALLY MY MEN.



MEANWHILE, THE PATHANS
HAD HEARD RUMOURS
THAT AN ENEMY HUMAN
SPY HAD TAKEN A MESSAGE
TO NALWA FROM JAMALI



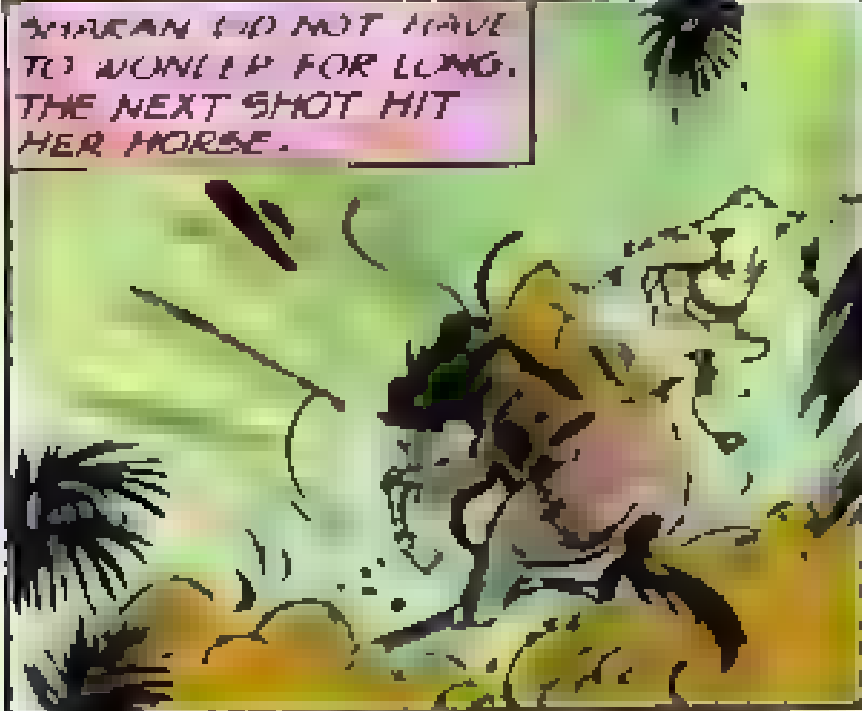
SHE WILL
HAVE TO
PASS BY
THIS CAVE
ON HER WAY
BACK LET US
AMOUNT IN
HER.

A FEW HOURS LATER -



A GUNSHOT!
WHO COULD HAVE
KNOWN ABOUT
MY ERRAND?

MARAN DID NOT HAVE
TO WONDER FOR LONG.
THE NEXT SHOT HIT
HER HORSE.



IT STUMBLERD AND FELL,
ROLLING HER OVER





THERE SEEM TO BE ONLY TWO OF THEM!



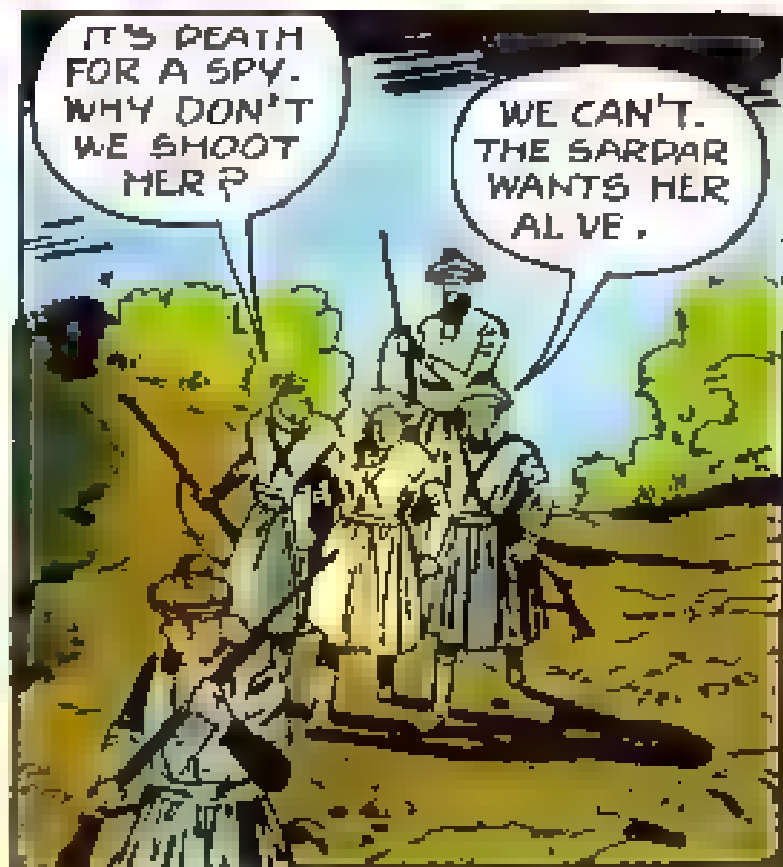
AS SHE LOOKED UP, SHE SAW TWO MORE STARING AT HER.

THERE SEEM TO BE MORE!



THE FOUR PATHANS PULLED SHARAN TO HER FEET.

SHE'S DANGEROUS. TWO OF YOU HOLD HER ARMS. ONE OF YOU WALK IN FRONT OF HER AND I'LL WALK BEHIND.



IT'S DEATH FOR A SPY. WHY DON'T WE SHOOT HER?

WE CAN'T. THE SARDAR WANTS HER ALIVE.

REALIZING THAT I WAS
GOING TO PLAY THE
HELLS BELLMAN,
SHARAN TOOK ANOTHER
TACTIC

WELL THAT PATHANA
YOU ARE FIGHTING AGAINST
ONE AND THAT TOO
A WOMAN!

ARE YOU
CHALLENGING
US?



WELL IF YOU ARE
SIN WHY DON'T
YOU FIGHT
WITH ME?

YOU
DON'T
STAND A
CHANCE
AGAINST
US



GIVE ME A SWORD
AND FIGHT WITH
ME ONE AT A
TIME.

ALL RIGHT
I'LL GIVE
YOU A SWORD
I'LL FIGHT
WITH YOU



THEY
WANT TO
FIGHT
WITH
YOU



THEY WANT A SWORD
AND FIGHT WITH
YOU ONE AT A
TIME.

AND BEHEADED HIM

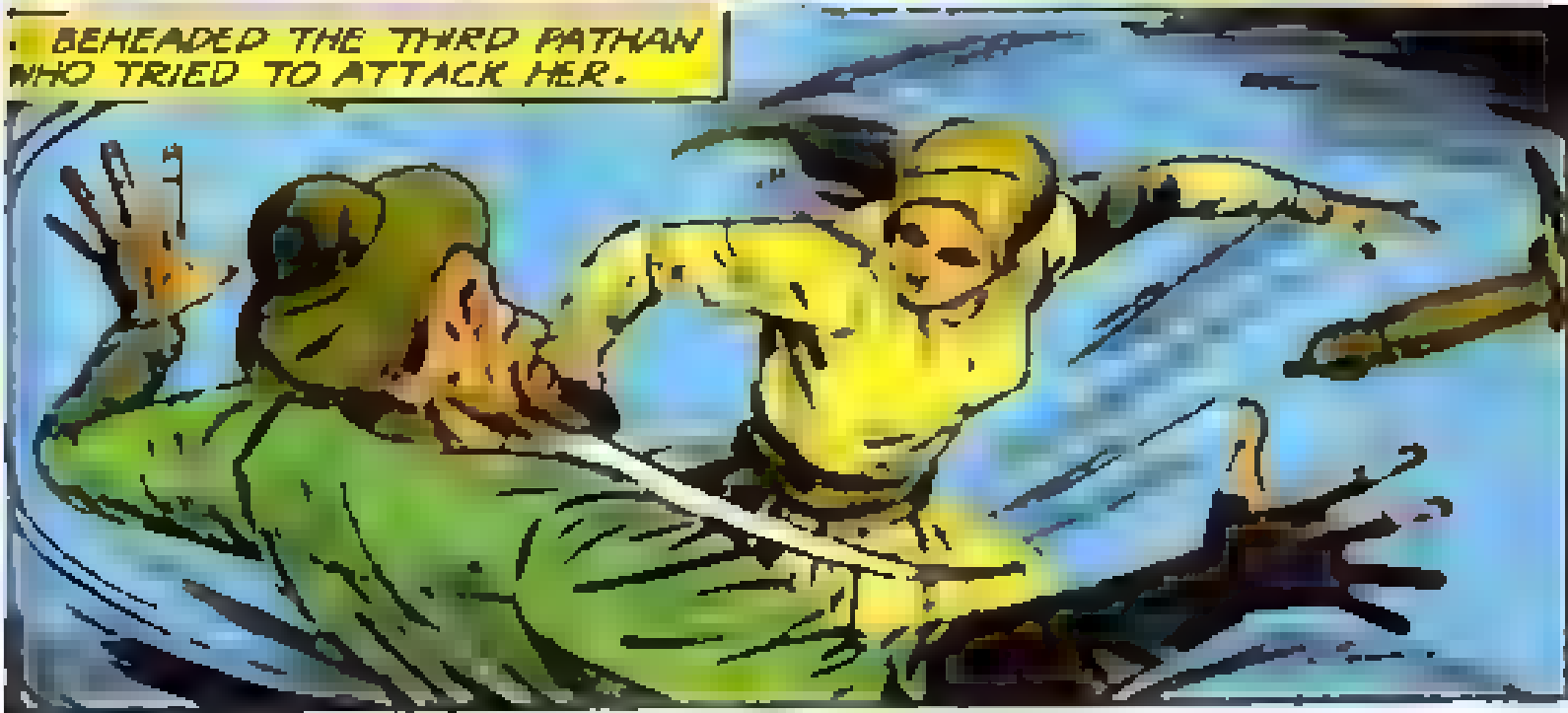
THE PATHAN NEAR HER
RAISED HIS GUN...



...BUT SHARAN
KICKED IT AWAY
AND



...BEHEADED THE THIRD PATHAN
WHO TRIED TO ATTACK HER.



MEANWHILE, THE SECOND PATHAN WHO HAD GONE TO RETRIEVE HIS GUN, STEPPED ON A COBRA.

EE--AH--!
I'VE BEEN BITTEN BY A SNAKE.



SHADIA NOW FACED THE SURVIVING PATHAN.



WITH HER SILENT MOVEMENTS SHE SUCCEEDED IN DRIVING HIM TO THE EDGE OF THE CLIFF

NOW ONE KICK SHOULD FINISH HIM



WITH THE IMPACT OF SHARAN'S KICK, THE PATHAN LOST HIS BALANCE.



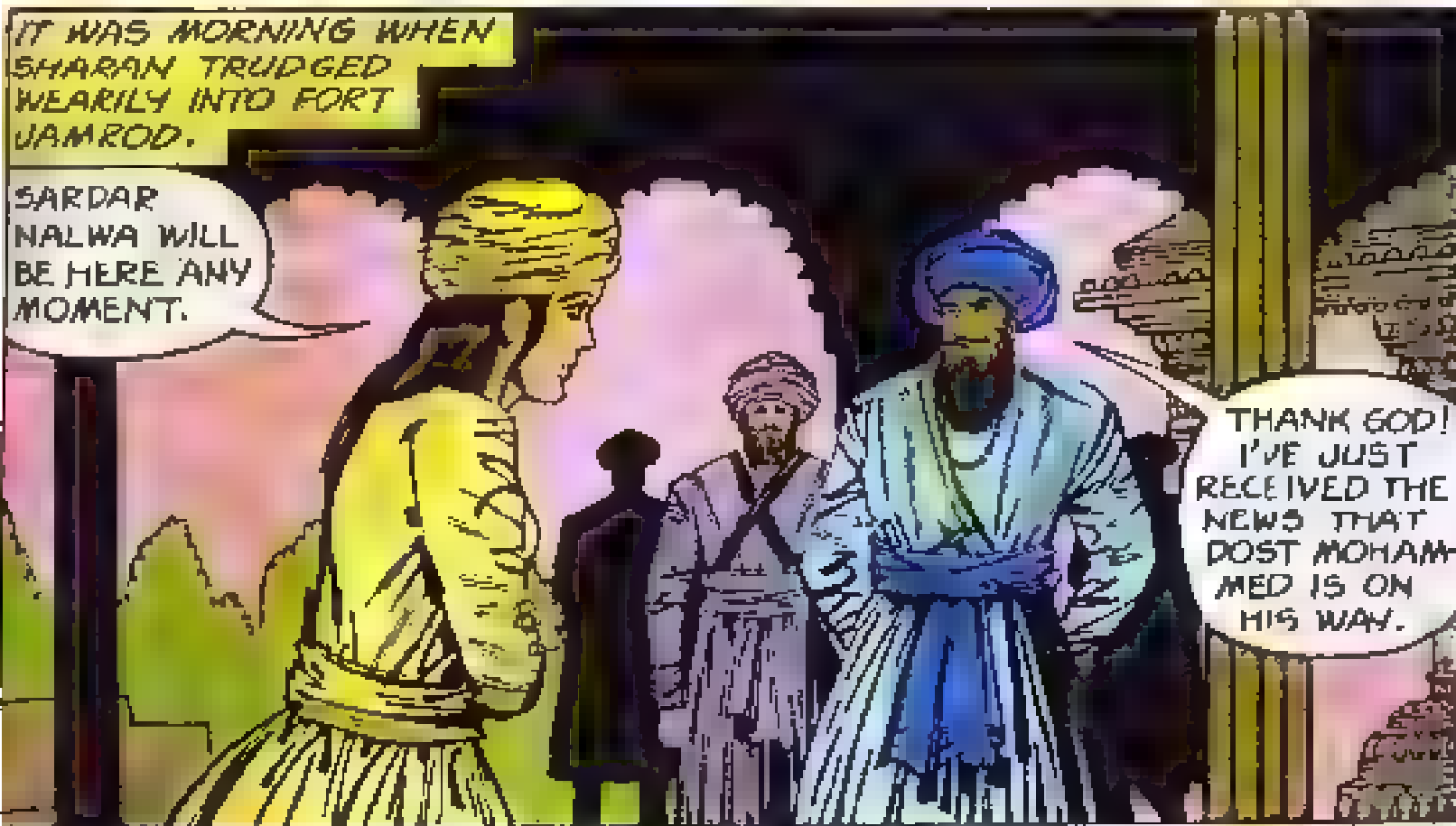
SHARAN RAN FOR ABOUT HALF A MILE AND THEN SAT DOWN TO REST.



O GOD! YOU ARE MERCIFUL. YOU SAVED ME AGAIN.

IT WAS MORNING WHEN SHARAN TRUDGED WEARILY INTO FORT JAMROD.

SARDAR NALWA WILL BE HERE ANY MOMENT.



THANK GOD! I'VE JUST RECEIVED THE NEWS THAT DOST MOHAMMED IS ON HIS WAY.

THE ARMIES OF HALWA
AND LAHORE
MET OUTSIDE FORT



THE ARMY OF LAHORE
WAS LARGER THAN
THAT OF HALWA
AND MORE POWERFUL



NO TIME EVEN TO MOURN
THE DEATH OF HER BENE-
FACTOR. MAHA SINGH HAD
ANOTHER ERRAND FOR HER.

GO TO LAHORE
WITH YOUR HUSBAND
AND REQUEST RANJIT
SINGH TO SEND AN
ARMY TO HALWA
AS THE KING
IS BOUND TO
ATTACK AGAIN

GO TO LAHORE
WITH YOUR HUSBAND
AND REQUEST RANJIT
SINGH TO SEND AN
ARMY TO HALWA
AS THE KING
IS BOUND TO
ATTACK AGAIN



WELL THAT YOU GIVE
THE MESSAGE TO HIM
PERSONALLY I CAN
NOT TRUST YOUR
SARAN SHAM

I WILL,
SARDAR.

AT LAHORE WHEN SHARAN
AND BHIKHIJI COULD NOT
GAIN THE MESSAGE AND
THE NEWS OF NALWA'S DEATH

I HAVE
LOST MY
BEST
GENERAL.

AND THIS IS THE THIRD
APPEAL FOR REINFORCE-
MENTS. THE OTHER TWO
WERE SENT BY
SARDAR NALWA

STRANGE THE
MORE YOU
APPEALS NEVER
RECEIVED ME
SHAN SHAM.
CAN I GO
PERSONALLY TO
AND SEE AND
SEE "DRIST
MUTAMMED.
GIVE ME THE
BEST MEN
WE HAVE

I WILL,
SAR

AND A SHORT TIME AFTER
RECEIVING, SHAN SHAM HAD
ALREADY REPLIED THE MESSAGE TO HIM
HIS KHAL, NALWA HE TURNED TO
THE CITY

BHIKALI, YOU MAY STAY
WITH THE OTHER OFFICERS
BIBI SHARAN KAUR WILL
STAY WITH MY FAMILY

LATER, AS SHARAN KAUR RESTED IN HER ROOM, DHIAN SINGH ENTERED WITHOUT EVEN KNOCKING.

WELL, I TRIED TO TELL YOU ME, DIDN'T YOU?

I'M HERE BY MY DUTY

HE ADVANCED MENACINGLY TOWARDS SHARAN

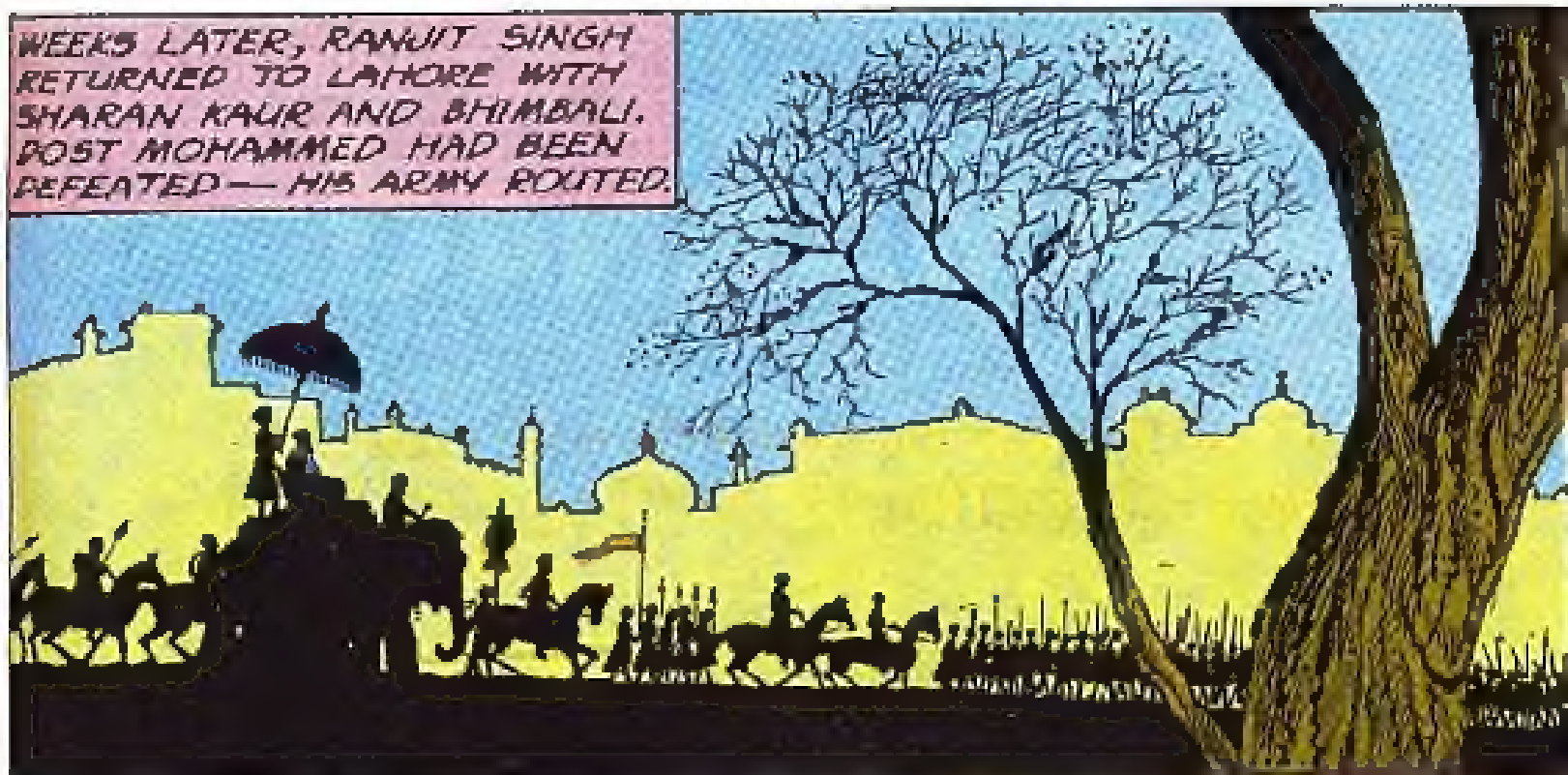
BEAR THAT YOU WILL NOT GO BACK ALIVE.

IN THE MEANTIME, SHARAN KAUR WAS ALREADY ON THE GROUND, HER BODY COVERED IN BLOOD.

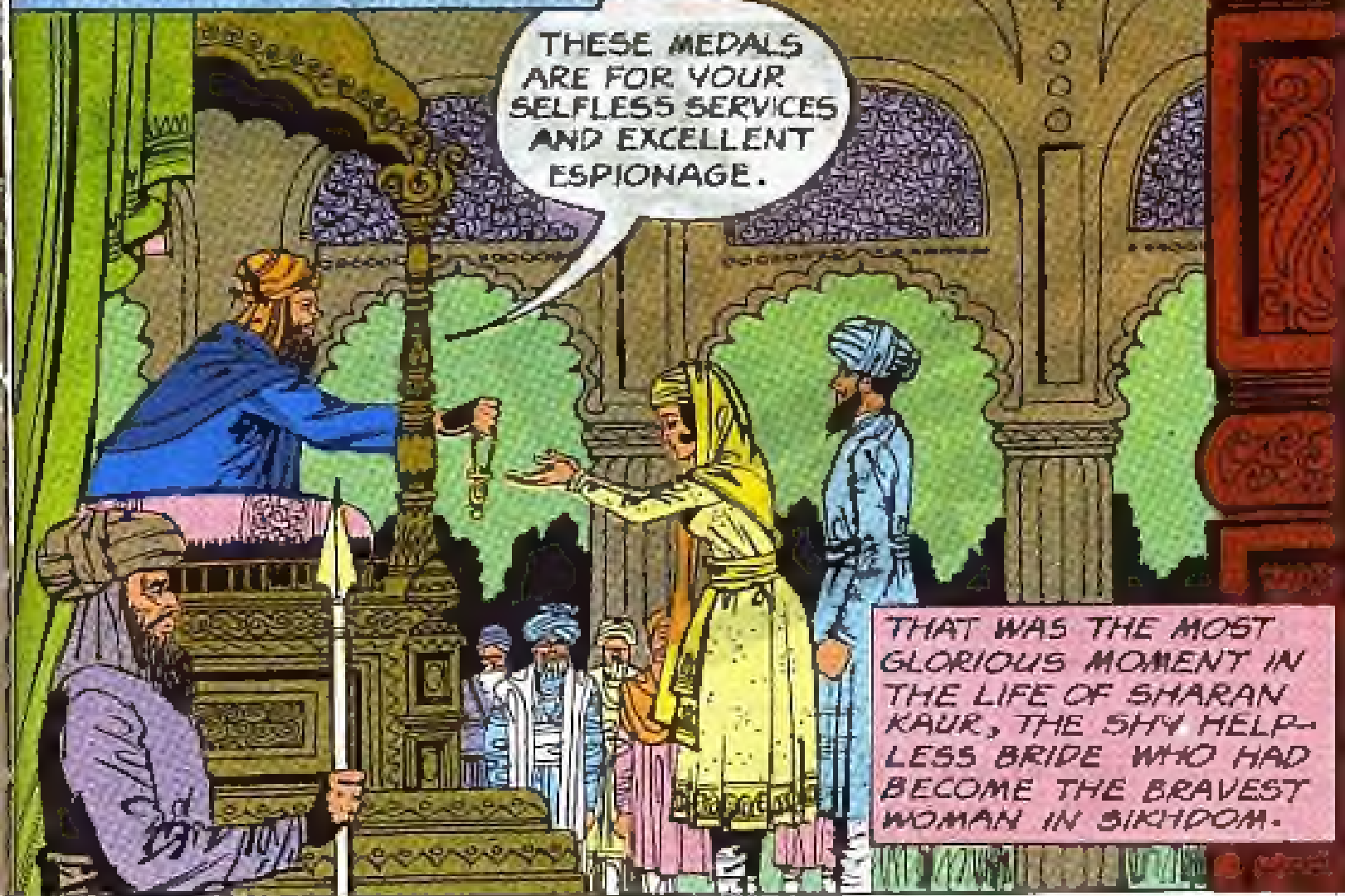
THEN, LEAVING THE UNCONSCIOUS DHIAN SINGH ON THE FLOOR, SHARAN KAUR EXITED RANJIT SINGH'S PALACE.



WEEKS LATER, RANJIT SINGH RETURNED TO LAHORE WITH SHARAN KAUR AND BHIMBALI. POST MOHAMMED HAD BEEN DEFEATED — HIS ARMY ROUTED.



AT A SPECIAL DURBAR THE GREAT RANJIT SINGH HIMSELF BESTOWED HONOURS ON SHARAN KAUR AND BHIMBALI.



THAT WAS THE MOST GLORIOUS MOMENT IN THE LIFE OF SHARAN KAUR, THE SHY HELPLESS BRIDE WHO HAD BECOME THE BRAVEST WOMAN IN SIKHDOM.



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